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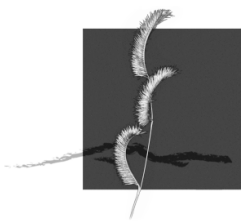
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Preface

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Preface

This volume and its companion, *Monocots: Comparative Biology and Evolution (excluding Poales)* (Aliso Vol. 22, 2006), contain papers presented at the Third International Conference on the Comparative Biology of the Monocotyledons ("Monocots III") and the Fourth International Symposium on Grass Systematics and Evolution ("Grasses IV"). Hosted by Rancho Santa Ana Botanic Garden, Claremont, California, the conferences were held concurrently at the nearby Ontario Convention Center from March 31 through April 4, 2003. Some 305 researchers and students from 37 countries attended.

A history of the International Conference on the Comparative Biology of the Monocotyledons is provided in the preface of the companion to the current volume. A historical account of the international conferences on grass systematics and evolution may be found in the preface of *Grasses: Systematics and Evolution* (S. W. L. Jacobs and J. Everett [editors], CSIRO Publishing, Collingwood, Victoria, Australia, 2000), the product of Grasses III, held in Sydney in 1998. An earlier conference, at the Smithsonian Institution in 1986, resulted in another important publication: *Grass Systematics and Evolution* (T. R. Soderstrom, K. W. Hilu, C. S. Campbell, and M. E. Barkworth [editors], Smithsonian Institution Press, Washington, D.C., 1987).

At Monocots III/Grasses IV, the goals of the scientific program were to: (1) Present and publish original research of high caliber. (2) Offer a strong core program in systematics while incorporating newer, relevant fields such as developmental biology and genomics, and to address the timely and challenging issue of data integration. (3) Assemble scientists and students, representing diverse fields, from around the world to interact, share ideas, and form collaborations. In a departure from past conferences, the Organizing Committee reserved sessions for contributed talks. We felt some prospective presenters who were not invited to participate in an organized session nor were organizing a session themselves would have original research of significant importance to report, perhaps involving taxa or processes not addressed in the organized sessions, and would prefer an oral presentation format.

Some 250 presentations were made in the form of talks or posters. Presenters in all 27 organized sessions were invited to submit papers for the proceedings volumes, along with presenters of selected contributed talks and posters. All manuscripts were reviewed by multiple referees.

At the closing session of the conference John R. and Charlotte G. Reeder were honored with an award acknowledging their many contributions to the systematics of grasses.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

In addition to the editors, other members of the conference Organizing Committee were Richard Chute, Ann Joslin, Tasha LaDoux, Bob Thorne, and Todd Young. Co-sponsoring societies were the American Society of Plant Taxonomists, Botanical Society of America, and International Association for Plant Taxonomy. Financial support came from the National Science Foundation (DEB-0314259), the W. M. Keck Foundation, VWR International, Epicenter Technologies, and Brad Blaine.

Many others contributed to the success of the conference, including the participants; Anna Bell as chief organizer; staff, students, research associates, and volunteers at Rancho Santa Ana Botanic Garden; session organizers; banquet speaker Bob Schmidt; session moderators; student projectionists; field trip leaders; Doug McCulloh and staff at Geographics; Karen Wilson; Linda Worlow; Ontario Convention Center; The Huntington Botanical Gardens; and the Claremont and Pasadena Chambers of Commerce.

Production of this volume was made possible through the commitment and many contributions of *Aliso* Editor-in-Chief Vanessa Ashworth and Technical Editors Linda Worlow and Carol Annable. Reviewers of manuscripts are listed on page 615. Allen Press (in particular Keith Parsons), Geographics, and the Columbia Indexing Group helped guide us through the process of publishing a work of this scale. We thank the Board of Trustees of Rancho Santa Ana Botanic Garden and Executive Director Patrick Larkin for their support, and Lucinda McDade, Judith B. Friend Director of Research, for her help and encouragement over the past year. The lead editor also thanks his family, in particular wife Sandra and daughter Cassie, for their understanding and patience during this significant undertaking.

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